

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-03

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CONGRESSIONAL INTEREST

EO 11652 NA
TAGS CASC (DAVIS, JOHN W.)
SUBJECT: UPDATE ON DAVIS FAMILY

1. SUMMARY: DURING DCM VISIT TO BELEM OCT 6, HE AND CONSUL BECELIA ASKED EMMA DAVIS (DAUGHTER) TO ROP BY CONSULATE TO UPDATE USG ON PROBLEMS AT DAVIS FAMILY FARM. THEY FOUND MISS DAVIS MORE RELAXED ABOUT THEIR SITUATION THAN DAVIS FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE BEEN IN PREVIOUS INTERVIEWS, AND HOPEFUL (THOUGH NOT NECESSARILY OPTIMISTIC) THAT BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES WILL ARRANGE SOME RESOLUTION OF THE SQUATTER PROBLEM AT CAPAZ WITHIN NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS. PARA STATE PROSECUTOR HAS PROMISED CONSUL STATUS REPORT ON PREPARATIONS FOR TRIAL OF SUSPECTS IN JULY 1976 INCIDENT. END SUMMARY.

2. MISS DAVIS SAID THERE ARE A TOTAL OF TEN AMERICANS AT CAPAZ NOW (SIX ADULTS AND FOUR CHILDREN). SHE TOLD US THAT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR THERE HAVE BEEN NONE OF THE INCIDENTS WITH ARMED SQUATTERS THREATENING THE SAFETY OF DAVIS FAMILY MEMBERS SUCH AS TOOK PLACE IN 1976. THE DAVIS FAMILY IS PROTECTED BY TWO STATE POLICEMEN PERMANENTLY ON DUTY. AS RESULT OF FAMILY COMPLAINTS THAT POLICEMEN WERE THEMSELVES TAKING THEIR LAND, CONDUCT OF POLICEMEN HAS IMPROVED, ALTHOUGH THEY SEE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AS

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LIMITED TO GUARDING DAVISES SECURITY AND DO NOT INTERVENE TO PREVENT LAND SEIZURES. ONLY DEVELOPMENT OF PSSIBLE CONCERN WAS APPEARANCE AT CAPAZ IN MAY 1977 OF STRANGER WHO CLAIMED TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF SNI (NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE SERVICE) AND SOUGHT TO TALK FAMILY MEMBERS INTO TRAVELING WITH HIM TO NEARBY MUNICIPALITY TO DISCUSS THEIR CASE WITH AUTHORITIES. MISS DAVIS REPORTED THIS CALL TO SNI IN BELEM AND WAS TOLD THE VISITOR WAS AN

IMPOSTER. SIX INDIVIDUALS WERE ROUNDED UP BY POLICE FOR QUESTIONING AS A CONSEQUENCE. POSSIBILITY WAS RECOGNIZED THAT VISIT MAY HAVE BEEN PART OF PLOT TO KIDNAP MEMBERS OF DAVIS FAMILY, ALTHOUGH CONCERN HAS DIMINISHED WITH PASSAGE OF TIME AND ABSENCE OF FURTHER OMINOUS SIGNS. FACT THAT ALL THOSE SUSPECTED OF PARTICIPATION IN FATAL JULY 1976 SHOOTING AFFRAY HAVE BEEN RELEASED PENDING TRIAL, INCLUDING TWO "COMMUNIST" RINGLEADERS, IS A CAUSE FOR SOME CONTINUING CONCERN.

3. AS FOR THE PROBLEM OF SQUATTERS' ENCROACHMENT ON DAVIS LAND, MISS DAVIS ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE BY NOW OVER THREE HUNDRED SQUATTERS OCCUPYING PERHAPS TEN TO TWENTY PERCENT OF THEIR LAND (MOST OF IT THE BEST LAND, CLOSE TO WATER). THE "INVADERS" CONTINUE TO POUR IN, SHE SAID. LAST NOVEMBER A GROUP OF BRAZILIAN ARMY OFFICERS FROM BRASILIA VISITED THE FARM AND PROMISED TO RECTIFY THE SITUATION BY JULY 1977. A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GOB LAND AGENCY INCRA WAS SENT TO MARABA (CLOSE TO THE DAVIS FARM) TO WORK OUT A SOLUTION TO THIS AND OTHER LAND PROBLEMS IN THE REGION. THIS OFFICIAL IS NOW SAYING THAT THE AUTHORITIES WILL BEGIN MOVING THE SQUATTERS OFF THE PROPERTY IN DECEMBER OR JANUARY, BUT ONLY THE SMALLER LANDHOLDERS WILL BE MOVED. THOSE HOLDING LARGE PLOTS WILL BE LEFT IN PLACE (PRESUMABLY BECAUSE THESE ARE THE OLDEST SQUATTERS AND THEY HAVE A "DE FACTO" LEGAL CLAIM TO THE LAND BY NOW). IT WAS ALSO REPORTED TO MRS DAVIS THAT INCRA ENVISAGES THE DAVIS FAMILY COMPENSATING THE RESETTLED SQUATTERS, ALTHOUGH SHE HAS NOT BEEN TOLD THIS DIRECTLY. THE DAVISES REMAIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FIRM IN THEIR REFUSAL TO "PAY OFF THE INVADERS."

4. MISS DAVIS HAS APPARENTLY SECURED THE SUPPORT OF THE BELEM ARMY COMMANDER IN THE DAVIS' LONGSTANDING BATTLE TO RECOVER THE LAND. SHE SAID HE RECENTLY TOLD HER THAT HE PLANNED TO SUMMON THE INCRA MAN IN MARABA TO BELEM, TO INSTRUCT HIM TO PROCEED QUICKLY WITH THE RESETTLEMENT OF THE SQUATTERS AT NO COST TO THE DAVISES.

5. THE PRE-TRIAL INVESTIGATION OF THE SUSPECTS IN THE JULY 1976 SHOOTING CONTINUES TO DRAG ALONG. THE DCM AND CONSUL ASSURED MISS DAVIS OF OUR CONTINUING INTEREST IN SEEING THE CASE CONCLUDED AND THE GUILTY SENTENCED, MENTIONING THAT THE CONSUL HAD DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH THE PARA STATE PROSECUTOR, ALMIR LIMA PEREIRA, A FEW DAYS BEFORE. MISS DAVIS WAS MOST APPRECIATIVE, ALTHOUGH SHE WAS PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES FOR AN EARLY AND SPEEDY TRIAL.

6. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY THE DCM AND CONSUL VISITED MR. PEREIRA AGAIN, SEEKING DETAILS AS TO STATUS OF CASE. HE HAD NONE TO GIVE ALTHOUGH HE PROMISED TO HAVE A REPORT FOR THE CONSUL IN A WEEK. HE EXPLAINED DELAY IN PROSECUTING CASE IN TERMS OF REMOTENESS OF TOWN IN WHICH INVESTIGATION IS BEING CONDUCTED AND COMPLEXITY OF THE CASE,

WITH OVER THIRTY SUSPECTS. CONSUL WILL FOLLOW UP WITH HIM PERIODICALLY.
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